What can you recognize in the profiles of gifted and talented children?

Each and everyone is unique and has different talents. The process of developing and expressing your talents is one that is constantly influenced by the way you respond to your experiences, express your talents and rise to your challenges, and by the opportunities and constraints in your surroundings.

Maureen Neihart and George Betts compiled six profiles setting out the characteristic features of gifted and talented children. These show how to recognize a gifted or talented child and how their surroundings, i.e. home and school, can best support them. You may well recognize certain features from more than one profile.

So what can you recognize in these profiles? Can you see things that could help you in your further development?

The various profiles are shown below, in relation to a child's social functioning, expressed talents and accomplishments in accordance with his or her potential and the choices he or she has made.

**THE SELF-MANAGING AUTONOMOUS**
- has good social skills,
- sets his or her own goals,
- follows strong areas of passions,
- is creative,
- stands up for his or her convictions,
- takes risks,
- is willing to learn,
- knows what he or she is capable of and demonstrates this knowledge to others.

**THE CHALLENGING CREATIVE**
- is honest,
- clearly expresses his or her own opinions,
- is direct (sometimes too direct),
- is not always willing to work and achieves varied results,
- is aware of anomalies and questions rules,
- has a need for recognition, particularly of his or her creativity.

**THE TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL**
- is inconsistent in his or her work,
- achieves average or below-average results,
- difficult to label as a gifted or talented child,
- shows aspects of learning and/or behavioural problems,
- is disruptive, vents his or her frustration, is unsure of his or her own talents and personal qualities.

**THE AT-RISK**
- is creative, pursues outside interests,
- low academic achievement (below-average),
- has a poor self-concept, criticises self and others,
- does not feel involved in school, at risk of dropping out of school.

**THE ADJUSTED SUCCESSFUL**
- is an achiever, but does not perform to the maximum of his or her abilities,
- is a perfectionist, avoids risks, is dependent,
- seeks approval, seeks to conform to other people's expectations.

**THE UNDERGROUND**
- denies his or her own talent,
- rejects challenges,
- feels insecure and afraid of failure,
- views high achievement as incompatible with social acceptance, has a diminished sense of self.

**THE AT-RISK**
- has lost confidence in himself/herself and in his or her surroundings (school and home),
- is more and more often absent due to illness, anxiety keeps him or her at home, retreats to his or her own (real or virtual) world,
- is at risk of dropping out of school.

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**BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS**
Everyone has certain needs – in terms of competence, autonomy and relatedness. These are the three basic psychological needs.

**AUTONOMY: OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE YOUR OWN CHOICES AND TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY**
If this need is met, you experience
- the space to decide for yourself how to tackle a particular problem
- the space to express your ideas
- that your feelings and opinions count
- that you are regularly able to make your own choices
- involvement in important issues at home and in school.

**COMPETENCE: CONFIDENCE AND PLEASURE IN YOUR OWN ABILITIES**
If this need is met, you experience
- that you are capable of learning interesting new skills
- that you can succeed in the things you do
- that you will have plenty of opportunities in the future for demonstrating your abilities
- that you can devote yourself fully to new tasks, without being hindered by any constraints
- self-confidence and the approval of others, at home and in school.

**RELATEDNESS: FEELING SAFE, ACCEPTED AND CONNECTED**
If this need is met, you experience
- a connection with peers and adults, at home and in school
- that you are understood by others, and that others try and understand you
- that others appreciate you for who you are
- that you are expected to make a contribution, and that your contributions are valued
- that it is worth engaging with others.

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THE SELF-MANAGING AUTONOMOUS
You know what you want and what you're capable of achieving. You're keen to
learn new things. You learn from your mistakes and seek to achieve the
goals that you've set yourself. You're proud of what you've achieved in your
own way and want others to appreciate your accomplishments. You have a
good understanding of yourself and enjoy good relations with other people.
You're not afraid to be yourself. You feel understood and acknowledged. You
may sometimes decide to spend more time on outside interests than on the
pursuit of high academic achievements.

flexible, tenacious, driven, strongly self directed, goal-oriented, optimistic,
tolerant, respectful, resilient

TIPS
- Suggest that the child learns to base the child's action on his or her own needs and interests.

THE ADJUSTED SUCCESSFUL
You're a high achiever. Your achievements often attract admiration and
appreciation from others. You're set on obtaining the best possible
results and are keen to avoid any mistakes. You ask others to confirm
that you are doing the right thing, even if it's not really necessary.

You find it hard to trust your own judgement or to follow a path of your
own. You're sensitive to what your surroundings expect of you. Other
people tend to assume that you can easily do things on your own,
without any extra challenges or help. Would you be able to achieve
even more or would you like to do something completely different,
based on your own choices?

keen to score high marks, loved and admired, conforming,
looks for approval, afraid of failure, a fixed mindset, tends to take
the safe choice or the familiar route

TIPS
- Suggest that the child learns to accept failure and work on the child's weaknesses.

THE UNDERGROUND
You do your best to go unnoticed. You don't want to work on different projects from the
rest of the group. You think that the rest of the group won't accept a high academic
achiever. You give priority to ‘fitting in with the group’ over and above developing your
talents and pursuing your interests. You're unsure and tend to avoid challenges. You
don't have a clear picture of your own desires and abilities. You don't set yourself your
own goals.

You may have certain physical complaints. You may also tend to isolate yourself more
and more from others. Discovering who you are and what you can and want to do,
represents a huge challenge for you. Not everyone recognises your talents since you
do your utmost to go unnoticed. Your parents are aware of your qualities, though.

looks for social acceptance, variable friendships, unsure, impressionable,
loss of individuality, lets opportunities go to waste

TIPS
- Suggest that the child learns to connect short-term needs with long-term goals.

THE CHALLENGING CREATIVE
You're creative in your thoughts and actions. Thanks to your keen observational
skills, you're adept at spotting exceptions to the rules. You don't take things for
granted, you're critical and direct, at times too direct. Your academic achieve-
ments are somewhat erratic, as is your behaviour at school: some teachers get
along with you like a house on fire, others regard you as difficult and cheeky.

creative, perseveres in passions, high energy, bored, impatient, poor self-control,
strong sense of justice, emotionally labile

TIPS
- Suggest that the child learns how to use the child's strengths to learn in different and better ways.

THE TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL
You have qualities and strengths in abundance. At the same time, you experience problems in learning and
behaviour. This is frustrating and confusing. You may find yourself feeling stupid and misunderstood. You have a
powerful need to feel that your talents are recognised and put to use, and that you can work on your skills.

At the same time, you need coping strategies to deal with your personal challenges. Accept their existence and learn
to deal with them. In doing so, emphasise the development of your talents.

frustrated, not task-oriented, tendency to feel anxious

TIPS
- Suggest that the child connects short-term needs with long-term goals.

THE AT-RISK
You're creative and sensitive. You're not motivated for school-related interests and prefer to seek your challenges in the form of outside
interests. Although you attend school in a purely physical sense, you feel hardly any sense of involvement with the things that go on there. You're at risk of transferring to successively lower academic levels. Your behaviour
is regularly irresponsible and inappropriate.

There are also problems at home, where tensions sometimes run high. You often blame other people or ‘the situation’ and are hardly conscious of
your own role, if at all. Hobbies (such as computer games, art and music)
generate positive energy and help you to express your talents.

unrealistic expectations, feels unaccepted, poor self-concept, feels depressed,
thrill-seeking, little or no sense of responsibility, low academic achievement

TIPS
- Suggest that the child promotes a sense of independence and facilitate co-learning with peers.

GIVE ME SPACE AND A FREE REIN TO LEARN

WHAT DO I WANT? HELP ME TO FIND OUT HOW TO CHOOSE MY OWN PATH

TEACH ME HOW I CAN BELONG BY BEING MYSELF

HELP ME TAKE CONTROL OF MY OWN DEVELOPMENT

ENCOURAGE ME TO DEVELOP MY TALENTS AND HELP ME TO WORK ON MY WEAKNESSES

CHALLENGE ME TO PUT MY CREATIVITY TO GOOD USE

FIND NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPING PASSIONS

offer structure and confidence in order to explore the child's future

promote a sense of independence and facilitate co-learning with peers

learn to base the child's action on his or her own needs and interests

learn to accept failure and work on the child's weaknesses

connect short-term needs with long-term goals

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